

in Hawaii—who depend on the program for long-term nursing care. It imposes an age tax on people 50 to 64 that allows insurance companies to charge them five times more for insurance. It fulfills the Republican Party's cherished goal of defunding Planned Parenthood. It undermines protections for Americans living with serious and chronic diseases who could face the reimposition of yearly and lifetime caps on their care.

For millions of people in our country, TrumpCare is not some abstract proposal that has no relevance to their lives. Last week, Senator MURRAY, Senator VAN HOLLEN, and I joined three advocates—Ian, Marques, and Jill—who told us their stories about how TrumpCare would impact them.

Ian grew up in Fond du Lac, WI. During his sophomore year in high school, Ian discovered he had bone cancer after suffering an injury playing football. He has been cancer-free for 6 years and is now pursuing a career in medical research, in large part, because of his experience in fighting this cancer. Although Ian has been cancer-free for some time now, he is very concerned about what TrumpCare could mean for him if his disease comes back. He has a preexisting condition.

Marques lives in Richmond, VA. He was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when he was only 27 years old. He has three young daughters and faces a lifetime of extensive treatment for his disease. Because of the Affordable Care Act and the guarantee of coverage it affords every American, Marques did what he never thought he would be able to do with MS, he started his own business.

Jill is from Hillard, OH. Her daughter Alison was born with cystic fibrosis. Alison endured a lot at a very young age. When she was only 7, Alison had part of her lung removed because of the damage her disease caused. Because she has health insurance, which makes paying for expensive CF drugs more affordable, Alison is a happy teenager planning eagerly for her future. Jill made clear what would happen if TrumpCare passes: Alison's CF medication would become prohibitively expensive. Under TrumpCare, Jill would have to make decisions about which drugs she could afford for Alison, not which would work best to fight her disease.

Annual or lifetime limits on healthcare coverage will mean constant worry about paying for the life-saving care that Ian, Marques, Jill, and their families need—not starting a business, not living like a normal teenager or young adult with dreams for the future. They will spend practically every waking moment just worrying about how they are going to pay for the care they need to live.

TrumpCare would be a disaster for the American people, and we are going to fight against it tooth and nail, but I also want to be clear about what we are fighting for. We are fighting for universal healthcare that is a right,

and not a privilege, for every American.

Tomorrow, I am going in for surgery to remove the lesion I have on my rib, but I am going to be back as quickly as I can to keep up the fight against this mean, ugly bill. The stakes are too high to stay silent. We need everyone in this fight because we are all in it together.

Millions of people across the country are mobilizing against TrumpCare because healthcare is personal. I am encouraged that so many people have been calling all of us and making their voices heard. The majority leader and Donald Trump can try to jam this bill down our throats, but we aren't going to let them succeed, and we are going to hold them accountable.

The fight continues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

WISHING THE SENATOR FROM HAWAII WELL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I just want to salute, on behalf of all of us in the Senate, our great, great Senator from Hawaii. Her courage, her strength, her conviction to help people who need help is just inspiring—that is the only word I could think of, “inspiring”—to every one of us.

We love you, MAZIE. We wish you well, and we can't wait for you to come back and rejoin the fight doubly invigorated.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I extend to my colleague from Hawaii every blessing for her successful health treatment. I know the thoughts and prayers of every Member of the Senate are with her tomorrow and beyond as she undertakes that healing path.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of the Senator from Hawaii tonight. They are certainly very relevant to the issue of healthcare here in America because each of us hopes that if a loved one gets ill, they will have the peace of mind that they know they will be able to get the healthcare they need and they will not go bankrupt in the process. Yet here we are tonight debating a bill titled “Better Care Act.”

Better Care, has ever there been a bill in the history of the United States of America so more perversely named than this Better Care Act which strips care from 22 million Americans?

I was very struck by one equation of this bill; that is, that it provides to the richest 400 Americans \$33 billion over a 10-year period. That is enough to pay for healthcare under Medicaid for 700,000 individuals—700,000 individuals. It rips the healthcare away from them to give \$33 billion to the richest 400

families. That is obscene. That is certainly not better care.

It is hard for me to imagine that a single Member of this body would vote to proceed to this bill, but here we are. Until we get agreement that we are not going to proceed, we have to continue to carry on this fight.

We know that 15 million people, CBO estimates, will lose healthcare in the next 12 months. That is even worse than the House bill. Last week, I came to this floor to call the Senate draft mean and meaner. The House bill was mean. The Senate's is meaner. Now we have the CBO estimate that says, yes, it is worse. One million more people would lose healthcare in a short period of time.

Furthermore, the rate at which standard Medicaid is compressed—Medicaid, as it existed before ObamaCare, that rate has increased to further diminish healthcare, having nothing to do with ObamaCare, just to add to the cruelty of this bill. So millions lose, but we deliver billions of dollars to the richest Americans.

In my home State of Oregon, just the elimination of the expansion of Medicaid, the Oregon health plan—just that would eliminate 400,000 Oregonians off healthcare.

Imagine those individuals holding hands, 400,000 Oregonians, stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the State of Idaho. Anyone who has driven across Oregon would realize it is 400 miles across Oregon. If you are driving it, it is 7 hours of driving. For 7 hours, at 50 miles an hour, 60 miles an hour, you are passing a stream of people who would lose their healthcare just from the elimination of the expansion of Medicaid.

My colleagues across the aisle have crafted this so as to put it beyond the next Presidential election, beyond the 2018 election and beyond the 2020 election. Why? They are so terrified of the impact of this on the election they decided to postpone it until after 2018 and 2020, as if that makes it acceptable to rip healthcare from millions of people. That type of cynical, cynical act, purely political, is not going to be viewed well by the American public.

If you are so ashamed of this bill, if someone is so ashamed that they want to postpone the effects beyond the next Presidential election 3½ years from now, then maybe you should be so ashamed as not to vote to move to the bill here in the short term.

One of our colleagues across the aisle noted today: I can't imagine—not quite the exact word-for-word, but it is close. I can't imagine that anyone in America would have a chance to review this bill and truly understand it in time to proceed to it this week, including myself.

Well, that is certainly true. Has there ever been a case where a bill profoundly affecting so many has not had the benefit of committee deliberation here in the Senate? Are we a legislative body or are we a dictatorship where everything is done behind closed doors